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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
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                       FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA
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     C.M. et al.,
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                                     No. CV-19-05217-PHX-SRB
              Plaintiff,
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                                        Phoenix, Arizona
               VS.
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                                           June 18, 2020
                                             10:32 a.m.
     United States of America,
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              Defendants.
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             BEFORE: THE HONORABLE SUSAN R. BOLTON, JUDGE
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                  REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
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                    TELEPHONIC SCHEDULING CONFERENCE
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     Official Court Reporter:
     Hilda E. Lopez, RMR, FCRR
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     Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Courthouse, Suite 312
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     Phoenix, Arizona 85003-2151
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     Proceedings Reported by Stenographic Court Reporter
     Transcript Prepared by Computer-Aided Transcription
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                          PROCEEDINGS
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     APPEARANCES:
     For the Plaintiff:
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PROCEEDINGS 1 2 3 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Civil case 19-5217, C.M. and others versus United States of America. Time set for telephonic 4 scheduling conference. Counsel, please announce your presence 5 6 for the record. 7 MR. MACWILLIAMS: I'm sorry. This is Phil MacWilliams on behalf of Defendant United States. 8 MS. REITER: This is Diana Reiter from Arnold & Porter 10 for plaintiff. 11 MR. FEINBERG: Your Honor, Jonathan Feinberg for 12 plaintiffs. 13 MS. CONE-RODDY: Emma Cone-Roddy for plaintiffs. MR. WALSH: This is Erik Walsh from Arnold & Porter 14 15 for plaintiffs. 16 MR. FIDLER: Harry Fidler from Arnold & Porter for 17 plaintiffs. 18 MS. REEDER: This is Emily Reeder from Arnold & Porter 19 for plaintiffs. 20 THE COURT: Good morning. This is the time for our 2.1 case management conference. I have reviewed the joint case 22 management report and I want to discuss some items with you. 23 We have quite a number of counsel on the phone for the plaintiffs. One of you will speak, not more than one of you in 24

terms of answering any of my questions or discussing any of the

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scheduling items. We don't have that problem on the defense
       Thank goodness there's only one of the two named counsel
on the phone.
         So who will be speaking on behalf of plaintiffs during
this scheduling conference?
         MR. FEINBERG: Your Honor, this is Jonathan Feinberg.
I would be happy to address most issues. There are one or two
when they come up when I ask the Court's permission to defer to
Ms. Reiter.
         THE COURT: Okay. That sounds fair. So the first
thing that I wanted to ask is about initial disclosures. In
the joint case management report, which was filed on 6-11, it
indicated that the disclosure deadline was 6-12. So were
disclosures made by both sides, Mr. Feinberg?
         MR. FEINBERG: That's one issue for the plaintiffs,
and I will defer to Ms. Reiter to cover.
         THE COURT: No, it's a yes or no.
         MR. FEINBERG: Oh, sorry, yes. The answer is yes.
         THE COURT: Okay. I figured that that one didn't
require a lot of discussion. So plaintiff has made disclosures
as required by the Mandatory Initial Discovery Pilot project.
         Mr. MacWilliams, did the Government make disclosures
as well?
         MR. MACWILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor.
         THE COURT: So may I mark this as already exchanged,
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Mr. Feinberg?

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MR. FEINBERG: Yes, Your Honor, with the caveat that we had some discussions about compliance with the Government.

I would be happy to discuss those at a later time if you wish.

THE COURT: Yes, we're going to be talking about issues related to disclosure and discovery and what I can order today and what my anticipation is for the future on disclosure and discovery.

Next, I set a deadline for joining parties, amending pleadings, or filing supplemental pleadings, and I say that it's a deadline to do that. It's actually a deadline for filing a motion to do any of those things. This is a plaintiff's item. I can set a deadline for you, Mr. Feinberg. If you think there's a possibility that there may be any type of a motion to amend, or I can indicate that there will be no motions to amend filed. What is your preference?

MR. FEINBERG: Your Honor, I don't see any motion to amend. We can complete with these deadlines.

THE COURT: Okay. Perfect. So no motions. Okay.

The next item that I have on my order concerns the discovery limitations that are set out in the federal rules, and we're going to have some discussion about the number of depositions, but the one thing that everyone can agreed to is the depositions will be limited to seven hours of -- one day of seven hours as provided in the federal rules. I don't recall

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that I saw any discussion about the numbers of interrogatories. Was the discussion, Mr. Feinberg, an agreement that 25 interrogatories is enough? I have it, by the way, as each side, not each party, and I know that's another distinction that's being made with respect to depositions.

MR. FEINBERG: Your Honor, at this point I think that is enough. We may need to go back with the discussion about the responses to the Mandatory Initial Discovery, and I want to say in direct response to your question, which was not a topic of discussion, and I certainly don't want to speak for the Government on this, but I believe that we would be in agreement due to the tenor of our previous conversations that 25 will be sufficient.

THE COURT: Do you agree, Mr. MacWilliams, that we can stick with no more than 25 interrogatories per side?

MR. MACWILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Now, I agree that this is a case where the limitation on the number of depositions is likely insufficient. I also have a practice of limiting the number of individual requests for production of documents that can be propounded by either side. And let me be clear about what that means. You could send one Request for Production of Documents that had 25 categories in it, or you could send 25 requests for production of documents that only requested one category of documents or some combination thereof. So when I say I am

limiting the number of Request for Production of Documents, I don't mean that you can send out multiple requests containing many, many categories of documents that -- the categories of documents can only add up to 25.

I don't know if that's sufficient in this case.

What's really addressed here are depositions. I believe that at this moment in time, without a significant disclosure, I'm assuming, without a significant disclosure of documents where a response to requests for production of documents, that trying to come up with a specific number of depositions is premature.

What I think needs to be done in this case is that the parties actually attempt to jointly develop a discovery plan.

And for example, there's a suggestion that the plaintiff, each plaintiff needs to depose several government employees about the same things. I don't know at this point in time, and I don't know if the plaintiff even knows at this point in time, if some of those government employees that have information about individual plaintiffs or individual minor children and what actually happened are the same people, and I don't know if the person who arrested or detained one of our plaintiffs might also have been the same person that detained one of our other plaintiffs. I don't know that the five children were all in different places. I have just a very vague recollection that some of them might have been in the same place and, therefore, it might be the same person that has

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information about more than one of the minor children, and so I think that rather than saying: Yes, indeed, plaintiff, you get 40 depositions and defendant you get the same number, that this case should proceed with, which is not an unusual way to proceed, it should proceed with document discovery and disclosure of witnesses who, in accordance with the requirements of both Rule 26 and the MIDP, that will give you the names and the information that those witnesses have, at least a summary of the information they have that's relevant to the case, and that would then follow with depositions.

Does that seem like a reasonable way that this case would proceed, Mr. Feinberg?

MR. FEINBERG: Yes, Judge, and if I could just ask one question, I assume that from Your Honor's description that you would issue an order requiring some additional reporting by the parties to the Court after meeting and conferring?

THE COURT: Exactly. That you would meet and confer and hopefully agree on, well, hopefully on everything, but that's probably not likely, but we would come down to just the areas of disagreement in your discovery plan.

You know, as an example, you know, the Government says, and I probably agree on first blush the Government says:

Gee, if you want to depose any current or former cabinet-level government officials, advisors to the President or the President, there should be certain requirements that are

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different than simply noticing a deposition. You know, I agree about that, but I have no idea, and I'm not even sure that at this moment plaintiff's counsel has any idea whether you would seek to discovery from some of the people that fall into those categories because if you haven't seen the documents yet, you don't know who the authors are of the documents or who implemented the policy or who gave the direction for the policy.

So, you know, that's kind of why I think that document discovery is important to proceed, and whatever you can't agree on after you can make a case for why you need the additional discovery, whether it's document discovery that the Government is withholding on the basis of some claimed privilege or whether it's deposition discovery that's based on the need, a numerical limit that the Government thinks isn't justified by the needs of the case, or it's based on the specific identity of a member of the, a high-ranking member of the executive branch of Government, I think that's the point where I would step in and try to resolve, not try to, I would resolve it, but I think right today it just doesn't make any sense for me other than to tell you, yes, indeed, this is a case where the limitations on discovery are insufficient and where my suggestion of 25 requests for production of documents may be insufficient. It doesn't really take us to where we need to go in this case, and I would expect there to be significant

cooperation between plaintiff's counsel and the Government's counsel to try to reach some reasonable agreement on a discovery plan.

So maybe this is the moment, Mr. Feinberg, when you can tell me why you think the Government's disclosures were just deficient?

MR. FEINBERG: Thank you, Your Honor. And first, I appreciate to give an explanation. With regard to the disclosure, on that issue with Your Honor's permission I'd like to defer to Ms. Reiter.

THE COURT: Go ahead.

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MS. REITER: This is Diana Reiter. We have concerns about the Government's MIDP responses which we've shared with the Government in a letter and during a meet and confer. For example, the Government has identified only eight government officials or believed to have discoverable information. The Government did advise us today that it will supplement its responses on June 29th following the meet and confer and letter that we sent to them, and so we hope to avoid having to raise these issues with the Court and plan to review the Government's supplement at the end of the month and make every effort to resolve our issues, but as I noted, we believe that the responses are insufficient and I am happy to answer any questions Your Honor has.

THE COURT: So Mr. MacWilliams, are you also

representing the Government in the other case that I've transferred in?

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MR. MACWILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor, the APS case.

THE COURT: Yes. So I can understand given the bureaucracy of the Federal government that it might be, it might take more time than it might in a regular civil case to come up with the required MIDP information, but, and I'm not prejudging 'cause I haven't read the current Motion to Dismiss except to note large parts of it that are identical to the Motion to Dismiss that I already ruled on in this case. It seems to me that the Government is going to have to make a rather monumental effort to gather information that's going to be the same information to a great extent for both cases, and that I would expect that that effort would be significantly underway.

As it relates to the specific things that happened to these five plaintiffs and their minor children; that is, you know, who on -- who in the, at the Arizona Border Patrol office made a decision, you know, who knows about where each, you know, why things happened to these plaintiffs. They may not be individual to the case, but the case, you know, we know from what the Government is telling us that it wasn't the border patrol in Arizona that just decided to do this; that it was done pursuant to a policy or a directive of people above them, above the border patrol office in Arizona, and the Government

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should be making a sincere effort to identify who those people are and to disclose that information.

I mean, from what Ms. Reiter said, did you really only disclose eight witnesses?

MR. MACWILLIAMS: Not quite, Your Honor, and I'll first start off by saying that the way you're sort of describing the case is exactly how we see it. I mean, you know, when you talk about the universe of potential relevant documents, we put them into two categories, like you said, yeah, just these plaintiffs and their experience at the border and then, you know, subsequently while they were in detention and the kids were in OR custody, and, you know, yeah, we made significant effort in identifying those documents and getting them ready for production.

And then to Your Honor's point you have sort of the bigger picture policy-type document, and you're right, this kind of ties into the difficulties of this case and we are trying as best we can be able to get that discovery done once so that it applies to all the cases that may be coming through, this one, the APS, and potentially others. So I agree that is what we are trying to do.

As far as the eight disclosures or the names, so that doesn't include -- those are strictly at the high-level policy side of things. The more individual type of individual claims of the plaintiffs, you know, at the border and the OR custody,

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we're definitely going to supplement those. We alerted plaintiffs to the documents they were in, but they asked us to disclose them and we agreed to do it, so that's on its way.

You know, on the policy side of things, I do anticipate adding to that supplemental list as discovery goes on and as our inquiries go on, but, you know, this case is about the policies made at the highest levels of government. It wasn't the border patrol agent who made the decision; it wasn't anything at the regional level. The allegations are it was a high-level decision, and that's who we have been focusing on, and that's who we disclosed. That's not to say that that's the next layer down of, you know, chief of staff and deputies won't be added to the list. We will if they were involved in these discussions and of policy formulations, but adding to the problem it is -- government bureaucracy, of course, plays in, but a lot of these people are gone, and you know, to really get to the heart of the matter and figure out whose role is what, if any, it involves ESI, and we are in discussions with plaintiffs about that, custodians and things like that, and once we're able to make agreements on that and get those searches done, I think then we will really be on our way and we will be able to start producing but, there might be privilege issues, of course, but then we will be able to start producing not only documents to the Government but from my point of view learning much more about the case where I can make those sort

of disclosures that plaintiffs are expecting.

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THE COURT: But I heard what you said, and one of the things that I want to remind you of is that there are claims for damages here. Not just -- it's not just the high-level policy. It's not just why its happened. It's the claim for personal injury damages that both the mothers and the minor children have alleged, and those things are very localized to the facilities where they were held, both the mothers and the minor children, and I think that it's imperative that the Government make sure that you immediately, if not sooner, find out who those individual people are because those are people who could easily, you know, if it's one of these contract children's place, I will call it places, I don't want to use anything pejorative, you know, they probably have a high turnover of employees, and I don't want to be down the road, you know, a year from now and you say, well, we know they were at this contract location, but that employee, we can't figure out who, we don't know who the people were anymore who did the things that the plaintiffs claim caused the emotional distress.

So I think that, you know, the idea that today the only names that you have disclosed are names of policymakers or people that implemented policies, and I am sure that these are important things to both sides in this case, but from my perspective the case involves a claim under the Federal Tort Claims Act for damages and finding out who the people are that

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have personal knowledge about the circumstances of the mothers and the children during the time that they are separated is to me very important. Now, I don't know if the bigger issues in this case that don't involve these specific people are all that important to the plaintiff's counsel. I understand from the Government's perspective you have this case, you have the other case, I don't even know if there is cases from other jurisdictions, and they all do relate to these bigger issues of policy, but I don't want to forget that we're actually talking about a Federal Tort Claims Act claim for damages for ten people, and that, and I think you have to focus efforts on that, that the documents that are in Washington D.C. or wherever these policies remain, they are not disappearing any They will still be there. Any claims that you have for privilege, they will still be there. The high-level people, their names will already -- always be known because they are going to be on these documents, but it's the local people, whether it's the local people at the border patrol, whether it's the local people at the adult detention center or whether it's local people at the facility where the children were during the period of separation, I think the government needs to focus on that immediately so that that information is available and isn't hard to find in the future or people hard to find in the future.

So Mr. MacWilliams.

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MR. MACWILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor, and I do agree with what you're saying. When I first started speaking I maybe glossed over it too much cause I was trying to get to the policy side of things quickly, but I agree with what you're saying, and I want to make sure you understand that these, what you're referring as the local documents dealing with these particular plaintiffs, yes, that's part of the case. We have identified them. We have gathered them. They are being prepared for production. And to your point and to counsel's earlier points about supplementing, those are the names I was referring to is we were going to supplement our disclosures. Instead of just waiting until we get the documents, we are going to actually go through that and provide the names as part of our supplement, so I agree with what you're saying and that's what we're doing. THE COURT: And when are you going to supplement? MR. MACWILLIAMS: Okay. I told the plaintiffs by Monday June 29th. The reason being is I'm lead counsel on the case and I am going to be out of the office next week. That's why I was hoping for a few extra, about a week or so, and I hope that's okay. I haven't heard back from plaintiffs yet, but I hope that's okay with them. THE COURT: Well, that sounds really reasonable to me.

project disclosures are already exchanged. The defendant will

So I'm going to show the Mandatory Initial Discovery Pilot

be filing a supplementing disclosure no later than Monday June 29th.

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On the discovery limitations, I am going to indicate the one day, seven hours for depositions and the limitations on 25 interrogatories including subparts, but I'm going to order that the parties prepare a discovery plan that discusses the numbers of requests for production of documents and not the number, but a specific plan. Maybe not identifying the names at this point, but a description of the people who need to be deposed. Some may be names. Some may be, you know, the person who provided something to these children at the place where they were living during the separation period. And then to identify in that plan areas of disagreement so that then we could have a conference about only the things that you're in disagreement on as opposed to today trying to pick a number that we know is greater than ten, but may be well short of 40.

So let me ask -- oh, here's something else that I highlighted. The idea that we're going to have motion practice concerning protective order, can somebody elaborate on what that's going to be about?

MS. REITER: Yes, Your Honor. This is Diana Reiter.

Again, if I may.

THE COURT: Go ahead.

MS. REITER: Me and the Government have been working in good faith to reach an agreement on a protective order and

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we made quite good progress over the last couple of weeks.

There is one sticking point which may ultimately have to raise with the Court, I am happy to outline if Your Honor would like, but we are still doing our best to work out, and we have not completed our discussions with the Government. Before raising it with Your Honor, we want to take one more run on trying to reach agreement on the issue.

of disagreement is. I just want to say that in the past 20 years I have never had to have motion practice concerning a protective orders entry. We might have had motion practice concerning whether a particular document that was produced in a different — in a category was over, was more confidential than it really should have been, but in terms of reaching the protective order, I've signed hundreds of them and they've all been on a stipulation. So I anticipate that it should be something that you and the Government can agree on.

I understand that you're still in negotiations on ESI and I would expect that negotiation and that agreement on the form of production of electronically-stored information would be included within your discovery plan.

MS. REITER: Yes, Your Honor. This is Diana Reiter.
We have reached an agreement in principle on the ESI protocol
and we don't anticipate any issues and we will include that in
our discovery plan.

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THE COURT: There's an indication here that the parties agree that an order pursuant to Rule 502 of the Rules of Evidence should be entered. I don't need an update. Again, if you have an agreement, that should be submitted with a stipulation and proposed order.

MR. MACWILLIAMS: Understood, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I think that even in the absence of a discovery plan that I should go forward and set the deadlines for the close of discovery expert disclosure and alike 'cause I don't want to leave this open-ended with you. I want you to know that you've got these deadlines that are out there. I mean, they are generous deadlines. One of them, the fact discovery is a year away and the expert disclosures are more than a year away, but I think that we should go ahead and have those here so that the idea is that you'll come up with this discovery plan and that will include new and extended deadlines for these items.

So I am going to order that the close of discovery and the final supplementation of MIDP responses for June 11th. I wanted to ask you a question about the way that you phrased the expert disclosures as affirmative rebuttal and supplemental. Is this a case where the defense would have affirmative expert disclosures, Mr. MacWilliams?

MR. MACWILLIAMS: Your Honor, I can't answer that for sure, but it's certainly possible. If it does, it's relating

to damages, you know.

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THE COURT: Wouldn't they be responsive?

MR. MACWILLIAMS: I think it's probably more likely, but I just don't want to rule out the possibility of having experts, affirmative experts.

THE COURT: I'm not ruling out the possibility. I'm just going to change it to plaintiff, defendant and rebuttal because that doesn't preclude an affirmative one. Usually we do the affirmative and responses in a situation where it's known that the defendant has a burden of going forward that might require expert testimony. So this doesn't preclude affirmative testimony because then the plaintiff has rebuttal. So I'm going to say that plaintiffs must provide expert disclosure by August 13th, the defendants by September 24th, and rebuttal disclosures, if any, by October 22nd of 2021 with expert depositions completed by December 23, 2021.

The parties have agreed that you will have good faith settlement talks no later than June 21st -- I'm sorry -- 12, 2021. The deadline for dispositive motions January 29, 20 -- oh, my gosh -- 22. And this is a Federal Tort Claims Act case which means that it is not a case that can be tried to the jury. It will be a bench trial. In light of that, I am not going to follow my usual practice, which is to set a firm trial date because with a bench trial, as soon as dispositive motions are resolved, I could quickly confer with counsel and set a

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trial date based on all of our calendars. So I'm going to stop
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    my order at the dispositive motion deadline for this case
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     rather than attempt to set a firm trial date.
              What else, if anything, Mr. Feinberg, did you want to
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     raise with the Court today?
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              MR. FEINBERG: Your Honor, the only issue at issue,
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     Your Honor, to issue an order requiring submission of a
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     discovery plan --
              THE REPORTER: I can't hear.
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              MR. FEINBERG: -- issue an order requiring submission
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     of a discovery plan. Will there be a deadline for that
     submission at some point early in the discovery period?
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              THE COURT: Yes. Yes. I want to give you a deadline,
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    but I want to consult with you on it. What would you think is
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     reasonable, 45, 45 days?
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              MR. FEINBERG: I think that in order to have a true
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    evaluation of the necessary document requests and depositions,
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    we will need to see the Government's ESI --
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              THE REPORTER: Need to see?
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              THE COURT: I'm sorry, I have to interrupt you.
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    You're voice is getting garbled. It's the telephone, not you,
     and the court reporter is having a hard time understanding you.
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     Did you say that you have to first see the Government's ESI?
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              MR. FEINBERG: Yes, that's what I said, Your Honor, in
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     order to have a better feel for the number of depositions that
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we would need to be taken, and the topic areas to cover, I
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     think it will be necessary for us to have a better
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     understanding of scope of information that will be produced.
              THE COURT: Did you get any ESI with your -- with the
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     Government's June 12th disclosures?
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              MR. FEINBERG: No, we did not.
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              THE COURT: You got no documents at all?
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              MR. FEINBERG: That's correct.
              THE COURT: Oh, Mr. MacWilliams, is your supplement
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     for next week going to have documents?
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              MR. MACWILLIAMS: Well, yes, Your Honor, I want to,
     again, get back to the two categories of documents here. We
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     have documents -- we disclosed the documents, a lot of these
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     the plaintiffs already have, but correct me if I am wrong here,
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     but my understanding as far as, we are disclosing ESI on our
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     disclosures, I believe there is a 30-day period in which to
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     produce it, and the vast majority of what we disclosed is ESI,
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     so that, you know, that's why we are where we are as far as the
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     document production.
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              THE COURT: So when do you expect to disclose
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     documents?
              MR. MACWILLIAMS: Well, our plan was to make our
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    production no later than July 12th.
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              THE COURT: Well, then why don't I set a 60-day
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     deadline for the discovery plan. Does that sound reasonable to
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you, Mr. Feinberg, or is that too long?
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              MR. FEINBERG: No, that's acceptable, Your Honor.
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              THE COURT: Okay. Mr. MacWilliams, is that reasonable
     for you?
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              MR. MACWILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor.
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              THE COURT: Okay. And I expect the discovery plan to
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     have an agreement on Request for Production of Documents and an
     agreement as far as it can go on who is going to be deposed
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     either by name or description. Okay.
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              Mr. MacWilliams, did you have anything else that you
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     wanted to raise?
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              MR. MACWILLIAMS: No, Your Honor.
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              THE COURT: Okay. I'll try to come up with an order
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     that incorporates the things that we have discussed today as
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     well as the deadlines that we've set in accordance with your
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     agreements.
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              Thank you all very much.
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              MS. REITER: Thank you.
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              MR. FEINBERG: Thank you.
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              MR. MACWILLIAMS: Thank you.
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CERTIFICATE I, HILDA E. LOPEZ, do hereby certify that I am duly appointed and qualified to act as Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the District of Arizona. I FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing pages constitute a full, true, and accurate transcript of all of that portion of the proceedings contained herein, had in the above-entitled cause on the date specified therein, and that said transcript was prepared under my direction and control. DATED at Phoenix, Arizona, this 8th day of July, 2020. s/Hilda E. Lopez 2.1 HILDA E. LOPEZ, RMR, FCRR